

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 28, 29, and 31-60 are presently active in this case; Claims 28, 35, 36, 37, 39, and 40 having been amended, Claim 30 having been canceled, and Claims 55-60 have been added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, the specification was objected to due to informalities. Claim 28 was objected to due to an informality. Claims 36-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 28, 29, 32-36, 42-45, 53, and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Osani (U.S. Pat. No. 5,610,686). Claims 46 -52 were indicated as being allowed. Claims 30 and 31 were rejected as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 36-41 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection.³

Regarding the objection to the specification, the specification has been amended to address the noted informalities, and a Letter Requesting Approval of Drawing Changes

³ While the Official Action states that Claims 37-41 were allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection, Applicant assumes that it is Claims 36-41 which are allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection to Claims 36-41.

is submitted showing marked in red the enumeration of element 14'. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to specification has been overcome.

Regarding the claim objection, Claim 28 has been amended to address the informality noted in the outstanding Official Action. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to Claim 28 has been overcome.

Regarding the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection, Claim 36 has been amended to more particularly point out the claimed invention. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection to Claims 36-41 has been overcome.

Claim 28 has been rewritten to include the allowable feature of Claim 30, and Claim 30 has been canceled. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 28 contains allowable subject matter and patentably defines over the applied prior art. Correspondingly, Claims 29 and 31-45 which depend directly or indirectly from Claim 28 are believed to patentably define over the applied prior art.

Claims 46 -52 were indicated in the outstanding Office Action as being allowed. Hence, newly submitted Claims 55-57 that depend from Claim 46 are believed to patentably define over the applied prior art.

New Claim 58 defines a stage apparatus including a counter stage that moves in a direction opposite to a movable stage in accordance with a movement of the movable stage, a first supporting frame that movably supports the counter stage, and a damping member that is arranged on the first supporting frame and damps a vibration of the first

supporting frame. As such, new Claim 58 is believed to recite subject matter identified in the outstanding Office Action as not disclosed or taught by the applied prior art. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 58 and Claims 59-60 that depend from Claim 58 patentably define over the applied prior art.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in a condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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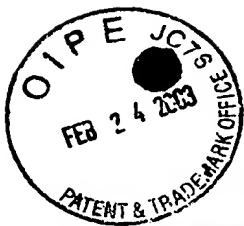
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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph on page 1, at lines 21-27, as shown below:

Conventionally, in a lithography process which is a process in manufacturing a semiconductor device, various exposure apparatuses are used to transfer a circuit pattern formed on a mask or a [retile] reticle (hereinlater, generically referred to a “reticle”) onto a substrate such as a wafer, or glass plate or the like that is coated with a resist (photoresist).

Please amend the paragraph on page 66, at lines 3-11, as shown below:

A reticle fine movement stage not shown in [Fig.] the drawings is arranged on the reticle stage RST to finely drive the reticle R in a non-scanning direction (in the X-direction) while chucking and holding the reticle R. However, driving operation of the reticle R in the non-scanning direction is almost never concerned with the present invention and, therefore, a description of a driving system in the non-scanning direction is omitted in the following.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown below:

28. (Amended) A stage unit comprising:

a sample stage that holds a sample;

a stage [diving] driving mechanism that drives the sample stage in at least one direction;

a first transmitting member to which at least one part of the stage driving mechanism is connected and a reaction force caused by driving the sample stage is transmitted; and

a first damping member that is arranged on the first transmitting member and damps a vibration of the first transmitting member, the first damping member being arranged at a position where a maximum strain of the first transmitting member is caused.

30. (Canceled)

35. (Twice Amended) A stage unit according to Claim 28, further comprising:

a stage base that movably supports the sample stage and is supported independently of the first transmitting member.

36. (Amended) A stage unit according to Claim 28, wherein the sample stage comprises:

a [first] coarse stage that moves in the one direction; and

a [second] fine stage that holds the sample and [can be relatively moved] is
movable relative to the [first] coarse stage.

37. (Amended) A stage unit according to Claim 36, further comprising:
a second transmitting member in which a reaction force caused by driving the
[second] fine stage is transmitted via the [first] coarse stage;
a linear actuator that drives the second transmitting member in the one direction;
a second damping member that is arranged on the second transmitting member and
damps a vibration of the second transmitting member due to the reaction force caused by
driving the [second] fine stage; and
a first controller that controls the stage driving mechanism and the linear actuator
so that the [first] coarse stage and the second transmitting member integrally move in the
one direction.

39. (Amended) A stage unit according to Claim 37, wherein
the second damping member is an electro-mechanical transducer that generates a
mechanical strain by applying an electric energy, and
the stage unit further comprises a second controller that controls the
electro-mechanical transducer in accordance with the reaction force caused by driving the
[second] fine stage.

40. (Amended) A stage unit according to Claim 39, wherein
the second controller controls the electro-mechanical transducer based on an
instructing value of a drive force of the [second] fine stage.

55-60 (New).